

TEXAS CONNECTION

Activity #64

Looking at Leaves



Extra Resources

Texas A&M Forest Service
Trees of Texas
<http://texastreeid.tamu.edu/>

Simpson, Benny J.
[A Field Guide to Texas Trees.](#)
Lanham, Lone Star Books,
1999.

Texas Overview:

Currently, there are 222 native species of trees in Texas (Simpson). Examining the leaves is probably the most common way to identify trees because leaves can be very distinctive from species to species, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service Trees of Texas website. The How to ID section offers illustrations of the different ways to identify a tree, <http://texastreeid.tamu.edu/content/howToID/>.

Leaf Identification Techniques:

While investigating a leaf, determine if the leaf is simple or compound. This is determined by looking for the bud. Compound leaves can be tricky. Sometimes it's hard to tell if you are looking at a leaf or a leaflet. Only by finding the bud, will you know for certain.

Study the size, shape and variations on the same tree. When distinguishing conifer species, it's helpful to identify the number of needles per fascicle. Some species like mulberry and sassafras display different leaf shapes on the same tree.

Note the leaf arrangement on the twig — opposite, alternate or whorled. Observe the blade, stalk, margin, venation (veins), base and upper and lower surfaces of each leaf.

The texture and color of the leaf also will help in identification.

Lesson Modification for Grades 4-8:


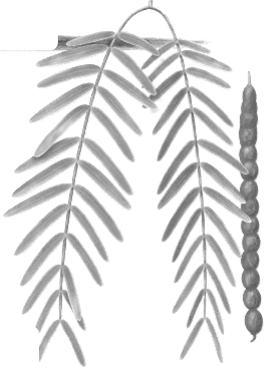
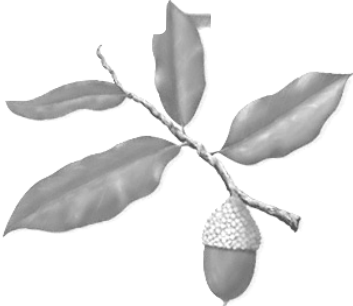





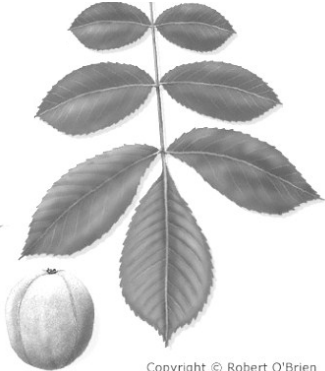

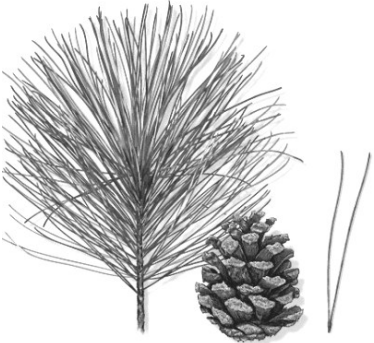

Have students attempt to identify their leaf collections by completing the activity in the Project Learning Tree guide. Encourage them to use the Texas A&M Forest Service Trees of Texas website or A Field Guide to Texas Trees book. The page at the end of this lesson — Looking at Leaves Using Texas Trees — can be used as an assessment or as additional background information for teachers.

Note: The beautiful illustrations in this lesson are provided by Robert O'Brien. The images are protected by copyright, but you can print them out for your personal use.

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Looking at Leaves Using Texas Trees

Name _____

Student Page: Looking at Leaves Using Texas Trees

